



Israel has no plan to review its nuclear policies, a government official said on Friday, playing down efforts by world powers at a U.N. non-proliferation conference to promote a Middle East free of atomic arms.

Hoping to win Arab backing for sanctions against Iran, the United States and other permanent U.N. Security Council members on Wednesday called for ways to be found to implement a 1995 initiative that would guarantee nuclear disarmament in a region where Israel is widely assumed to have the only such weapons.

The declaration followed campaigning by Egypt to focus attention, during this month's nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) conference, on non-signatory Israel, which has set peace with all its neighbors as a precondition for joining the pact.

"There is nothing new here, and no reason for a change of direction on our part," a senior Israeli official told Reuters.

Egypt, which heads a powerful bloc of non-aligned developing nations, has circulated a proposal to the NPT's 189 signatories calling for a conference by next year on ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons, with all regional countries taking part.

The United States and Russia, with the support of Britain, France and China, have been negotiating with Egypt to come up with an acceptable compromise proposal, Western diplomats say.

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